

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a ~~high-titer~~ reassortant influenza virus comprising transfecting host cells with expression plasmids containing ~~the~~ PB2, PB1, PA, NP and M genes from ~~the~~ A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain, ~~the~~ an NS gene from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and ~~the~~ HA and NA genes from an influenza virus of interest other than A/England/1/53, to obtain a ~~high-titer~~ reassortant influenza virus.
- 2-7. (Canceled)
8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the NS gene has ~~the~~ a sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said host cells are mammalian cells.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein said mammalian cells are selected from the group consisting of cells ~~approved~~ suitable for preparing vaccines for use in humans.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein said mammalian cells are Vero cells.
12. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said influenza virus of interest is selected from the group consisting of human, avian, swine and equine.
13. (Currently Amended) A reassortant influenza virus strain comprising a modified A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain, wherein ~~the~~ an NS gene of the A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain is replaced with the an NS gene from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and ~~the~~ HA and NA genes from an influenza virus strain of interest other than A/England/1/53.
14. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a reassortant influenza virus vaccine comprising transfecting cells with expression plasmids containing the PB2, PB1, PA, NP and M genes from ~~the~~ an A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain, ~~the~~ an NS gene from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain encoding an NS1

protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and the HA and NA genes from an influenza virus of interest other than A/England/1/53, to obtain a reassortant influenza virus vaccine.

15. (Currently Amended) A reassortant influenza virus vaccine comprising a modified A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein ~~the~~ an NS gene of the A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain is replaced with ~~the an~~ NS gene ~~from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain~~ encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and the HA and NA genes from an influenza virus strain of interest other than A/England/1/53.
16. (Original) The vaccine of claim 15, further comprising an adjuvant which enhances an influenza virus immune response.
17. (Currently Amended) A kit for producing an influenza virus master strain comprising expression plasmids containing ~~the~~ PB2, PB1, PA, NP and M genes from ~~the an~~ A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain and ~~the an~~ NS gene ~~from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain~~ encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6.
18. (Currently Amended) A modified A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza virus master strain, wherein ~~the~~ PB2, PB1, PA, NP and M genes are from ~~the~~ A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain, ~~the a~~ NS gene is ~~from the A/England/1/53 influenza strain~~ encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and the HA and NA genes are from any influenza virus other than A/England/1/53.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a reassortant influenza virus comprising infecting a host cell with the influenza virus master strain of claim 18 and an influenza virus of interest other than A/England/1/53, wherein the genes

from the master strain and the virus of interest reassort in the host cell to produce a different virus strain.

20. (Canceled)
21. (Currently Amended) An A/PuertoRico/8/34 master strain used for producing an influenza virus, the improvement which consists of replacing ~~the~~ an NS gene of the A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain with ~~the~~ an NS gene ~~from the~~ A/England/1/53 influenza strain encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 and an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:6, and HA and NA genes from any influenza virus other than A/England/1/53.
22. (New) A method for producing a reassortant influenza virus comprising transfecting host cells with expression plasmids containing PB2, PB1, PA, NP and M genes from A/PuertoRico/8/34 influenza strain, HA and NA genes from an influenza virus of interest other than A/England/1/53, and an NS gene encoding an NS1 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:3 with one or more changes selected from the group consisting of amino acid substitutions at positions 21, 58, 60, 127, 174, and 189 and a deletion of amino acids 231-238 and encoding an NS2 protein having an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:4 with one or more changes selected from the group consisting of amino acid substitutions at positions 16, 31, 86, and 107 to obtain a reassortant influenza virus.
23. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein the substitution of the NS1 amino acid sequence at position 21 is Gln to Arg, at position 58 is Thr to Ile, at position 60 is Val to Ala, at position 127 is Asn to Ser, at position 174 is Val to Ile, at position 189 is Asp to Asn, and the substitution of the NS2 amino acid sequence at position 16 is Met to Ile, at position 31 is Met to Ile, at position 86 is Lys to Arg, and at position 107 is Phe to Leu.